

Joseph Speidel and Company Building
1417 Main Street
Wheeling
Ohio County
West Virginia

HABS No. WV-204

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7-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D. C. 20240

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

JOSEPH SPEIDEL AND COMPANY BUILDING

HABS No. WV-204

Location: 1417 Main Street, Wheeling,
Ohio County, West Virginia.

Present Owner
and Occupant: W. A. Wilson and Sons.

Present: Warehouse.

Significance: Joseph Speidel and Company had the largest wholesale grocery business in West Virginia during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. This building, which was the company's first warehouse, is a fine example of the cast iron front buildings built along lower Main Street during the late 1800s. The building designed in the High Victorian Italianate style extended between Main and South Streets with cast iron fronts on both facades. Today it is Wheeling's single surviving double front cast iron building.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: C. 1877. The Ohio County, City and County Land Book stated in 1876 that the south one third of Lot 8, Square 3 was unimproved. The following year the 1877 Land Book stated that the same property had been "improved" the previous year by a building valued at \$7,500.00.
2. Architect: The Wheeling Daily Intelligencer, August 31, 1876 reported the names of the contractors working on the Joseph Speidel & Co. Building "Armstrong, Coen & Co., Carpenter work; Scheule & Lutz, Stone work; B. F. Caldwell, Tin work; Thompson & Hibberd, plumbing."
3. Original and subsequent owners: The Speidel Building was built on the south one third of Lot 8, Square 3 of the Union District of Wheeling. The following references to the title of this lot are found in the Ohio County, West Virginia Deed Books:
 - 1846 Deed, 8 April, recorded in Deed Book 28, page 459. Isaac W. Mitchell, Commissioner for Archibald Woods to William McGaughey, and wife and Randall Brown \$825.00 for the south one third of Lot 8, Square 3.
 - 1848 Deed, 12 February, recorded in Deed Book 30, page 430. William McGaughey and wife and Randall Brown to Enos Berberet \$2,000.00 for south one third of Lot 8, Square 3.

- 1853 Deed, 14 September, recorded in Deed Book 38, page 272. Enos Berberet to Phillip J. Anshutz \$4,750.00 for south one third of Lot 8, Square 3.
- 1858 Deed, 18 January, recorded in Deed Book 41, page 137. Phillip J. Anshutz to Henry Kurtz \$3,500.00 for south one third of Lot 8, Square 3.
- 1873 Will, 15 September, recorded in Will Book S, page 128. Henry Kurtz devised to Mrs. Louis Deckert, his daughter "the house and grounds now occupied by my son George H. Kurtz on Main Street, Wheeling, West Virginia as a store and residence to my daughter, Mrs. Deckert".
- 1873 Deed, 23 September, recorded in Deed Book 61, page 139. Louis Deckert and wife to George H. Kurtz \$6,000.00 for south one third of Lot 8, Square 3.
- 1875 Deed, 19 February, recorded in Deed Book 64, page 579. George H. Kurtz and wife to Joseph Speidel, John Speidel and John Waterhouse \$8,250.00 for south one third of Lot 8, Square 3.
- 1878 Deed, 5 January, recorded in Deed Book 67, page 574. John Speidel and wife and John Waterhouse and wife to Joseph Speidel two thirds interest in the south one third of Lot 8, Square 3.
- 1917 Deed, 1 September, recorded in Deed Book 159, page 132. Joseph Speidel to Miller Brothers Grocery Co. south one third of Lot 8, Square 3.
- 1945 Deed, 29 March, recorded in Deed Book 279, page 79. Miller Brothers Grocery Co. to Clara A. Miller south one third of Lot 8, Square 3.
- 1960 Deed, 1 July, recorded in Deed Book 419, page 243. Clara A. Miller to W. A. Wilson and Sons \$35,000.00 for south one third of Lot 8, Square 3.
4. Original plans, construction, etc.: Although there are no records available on the original plans, the Wheeling Daily Intelligencer, August 31, 1876, reported that this building was under construction and was "a three story brick business building (iron front)". Further mention was made that "An hydraulic elevator is to be put in the building."
5. Alterations and additions: The most significant alteration to the Speidel Building was the creation of a modern office behind the Main Street facade. Plaster board walls were installed to create office space in what was otherwise a four story warehouse.

Two doors were cut into the south wall of the building to connect it with the neighboring warehouse. An elevator was installed at the rear of the building. Although it was installed after construction of the building, it is apparent that it is not a new elevator.

B. Historical Events and Persons Connected with the Structure:

The Joseph Speidel and Company Building was built on lower Main Street near Fourteenth Street, in what was then the wholesale district of the city. Opened for business on November 20, 1876, this double iron front building extended between Main Street and South Street. It was one of the first iron front buildings erected in Wheeling, and it set the trend for later iron front construction in the city.

In 1850 the owner, Joseph Speidel, first moved to Wheeling, where he began his business career as a clerk in his father's retail store. In 1867, after a brief association with a wholesale grocery business, Speidel formed a partnership with his brother, John Speidel, and John Waterhouse. Joseph Speidel Grocery Company became the largest wholesale grocery business in West Virginia.

In 1878 Joseph Speidel bought out his partners. The Company used the "double iron front building, Nos. 1417 Main St. and 1416 South Street" until 1917. Joseph Speidel was throughout his long career as a wholesale grocer an esteemed resident and civic leader of Wheeling. Although "frequently solicited to accept various offices of trust and profit, he has steadily declined, preferring to devote his attention to business."¹

In 1960 W. A. Wilson and Sons purchased the Speidel Building. This Company has a long tradition of service to the Wheeling community. William Penn Wilson was a partner in the firm of Wilson, Donlevy, and Wheeler, which produced nail kegs used to ship cut nails manufactured in Wheeling - the Nail City. W. A. Wilson, son of W. P. Wilson, continued in his father's business and expanded it to include a lumber business. By 1912 W. A. Wilson and Sons was conducting the most extensive business in the state, dealing in paints, oils and constructive materials.

C. Sources of Information:

Anonymous. History of the Upper Ohio Valley. Madison, Wisconsin: Brant and Fuller, 1890. Two Volumes, 1566 pages.

Wingerter, Charles A. History of Greater Wheeling and Vicinity. Chicago and New York. The Lewis Publishing Company, 1912.

Wheeling Daily Intelligencer, Monday Morning, November 20, 1876.

1. Anonymous. History of the Upper Ohio Valley. p. 422.

Prepared by: Candace Reed
Architectural Historian
Historic American
Buildings Survey
September, 1976

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement;

1. Architectural character: This four story commercial building is the only double front cast iron structure still standing in Wheeling. It is scheduled for demolition in the fall of 1976.
2. Condition of fabric: Poor.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: Approximately twenty three feet wide by one hundred forty feet deep. Three bays, four stories.
2. Foundations: Unknown, not accessible.
3. Wall construction, finish and color: The two long walls are brick bearing construction, and both end walls are cast iron, which is for the most part rusted.
4. Structural system, framing: All the observed floors have approximately three by fourteen inch wooden joists at sixteen inches on center spanning the masonry bearing walls. In addition, the third floor has wooden trusses about four feet deep which appear to have been added at a later time to reinforce the joist system. They are tied integrally with the hoist system, the joist acting as the top chord of the truss in each case.
5. Porches, stoops, bulkheads: There is no front porch. However, there is an elevated covered loading platform in the rear. This wooden platform extends most of the block and has a shed roof.
6. Openings:
 - a. Doors and doorways: The front entrance and doorway is modern. There is a double door at the rear, center bay, opening onto the loading platform. It does not appear to be original.
 - b. Windows and shutters: SEE photographs.
7. Roof:
 - a. Shape, covering: Flat, built up roofing materials.
 - b. Cornice, eaves: SEE photographs.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans: The floor plans are essentially one large loft space on each of the upper floors. These were evidently used primarily for warehouse storage. The first floor is divided into two parts.

The front part extending back about forty five feet has been divided into rooms for office space, while the back one hundred feet is similar to the upper floors. There are connecting openings to the adjacent building (south) at the first and second floors. The basement was inaccessible.

2. Stairways: A small stairway leads from the front entrance (north extreme end) of the building up into the office space. There is an interior stair connecting each floor. It is a straight run along the south wall and appears to be original, including the original hand rail. There is also a stair to the basement in the middle of the building, but it was inaccessible.
3. Flooring: The wooden floors of the loft spaces appear to be original. The floor of the first floor offices is modern tile.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: The loft space walls are natural brick. The ceiling of the first floor in the loft space is wood similar to the floor while those of the upper floors are exposed to the joists. The office space has modern materials on the walls and ceiling.
5. Mechanical equipment: There is a large hydraulic elevator toward the southwest corner of the building. It is enclosed by a wire and wood frame cage. It appears to date from an early period of the building's use. On the top of the building there is an enclosed cast iron storage tank which probably held water for use by the building machinery. It is accessible through a trap door in the roof of the third floor.

D. Site and Surroundings:

The building faces east. It is in a totally urban site abutted on two sides by similar large structures. It fronts directly onto Main Street, and at the rear there is a railroad siding running the full length of the block along the covered platform. A new contemporary Civic Center for Wheeling is being built directly opposite the rear of the building on the other side of the railroad siding.

Prepared by: John McRae
Architectural Historian
Historic American
Buildings Survey
September 1976

PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

This project was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey under the general direction of John Poppeliers, Chief of HABS, and Kenneth L. Anderson, HABS Principal Architect, in cooperation with the Friends of Wheeling, Inc. The measured drawings were made during the summer of 1976 under the supervision of John McRae (University of Florida) with architectural technicians Mark L. Hall, Foreman, (Pennsylvania State University); Edward C. Freeman, (Arizona State University); Ruthie D. Wiley (Mississippi State University); Alan G. Wilig (City College of New York); and architectural Historian Candace Reed (George Washington University). The photographs were taken in 1977 by HABS Photographer Jack E. Boucher.

ADDENDUM TO:

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